

Subpart B—Water Resources Council Implementing Procedures

§ 707.6 Early involvement in private, State, local, and other non-Federal activities requiring Federal action.

(a) Section 1501.2(d) of the CEQ NEPA regulations requires Federal agencies to provide for early involvement in activities which, while planned by private or other non-Federal entities, requires some subsequent form of Federal approval or action to which NEPA applies. Such activities for which early involvement is appropriate include those private, local, State, or regional water and related land resources plans, projects or programs which should be included in a regional water resources management plan or Level B plan, since the plans normally required an EIS or assessment as provided in § 707.8(a) of this NEPA rule.

(b) To facilitate the implementation of 40 CFR 1501.2(d), the appropriate RFO shall publish and distribute in the region or basin in which a comprehensive or Level B study is conducted, guidelines for non-Federal entities of the types of plans, projects, and programs which shall be included in such comprehensive or Level B plan. The RFO shall advise non-Federal entities on the scope and level of environmental information and analysis needed for environmental documents.

§ 707.7 Ensuring that environmental documents are actually considered in agency decisionmaking.

(a) Section 1505.1 of the NEPA regulations contains requirements to ensure adequate consideration of the environmental documents in agency decisionmaking. To implement these requirements, the RFO shall:

(1) Consider relevant environmental documents in evaluating actions proposed in plans and studies.

(2) Make relevant environmental documents, comments, and responses part of the record in any formal rulemaking or adjudicatory proceedings.

(3) Ensure that relevant environmental documents, comments and responses accompany the proposed actions through existing review processes.

(4) Consider only those alternatives encompassed by the range of alternatives discussed in the relevant environmental documents when evaluating proposals for agency action.

(5) Where an EIS has been prepared, consider the specific alternatives analyzed in the EIS when evaluating the proposal which is the subject of the EIS.

(b) The NEPA process begins at the earliest possible stage of the planning process and is completed when the RFO makes a finding of significant impact or a record of decision. In cases where the Chairman of a River Basin Commission, or regional Federal official has been designated as the RFO, and a plan or report is submitted to WRC for review and comment after completion of the NEPA process, the environmental documents incorporated into such plans or reports, or submitted with them, shall be fully considered by WRC when it prepares its views, comments, and recommendations for transmittal to the President and Congress. The RFO shall include the Findings of No Significant Impact, or the Record of Decision, with the documents submitted to WRC for review.

§ 707.8 Typical classes of action requiring similar treatment under NEPA.

(a) Section 1507.3(b)(2) of the CEQ NEPA regulations in conjunction with § 1508.4 requires agencies to establish three typical classes of action for similar treatment under NEPA. These typical classes of actions are set forth below:

(1) Actions normally requiring EIS's:

(i) Adoption, approval or submittal of regional water resources management plans (comprehensive, coordinated, joint plans or elements thereof).

(ii) Adoption, approval or submittal of Level B plans.

(2) Actions normally requiring assessments but not necessarily EIS's:

(i) Establishment and implementing guidance (including significant changes) in principles, standards, and procedures for planning water and related land resources.

(ii) Adoption, approval or submittal of framework studies and special studies which include recommendations for future actions.